

As Romantic As Hazardous Waste

Toluene was found in every fragrance sample collected by the US Environmental Protection Agency for a 1991 report. "Toluene was most abundant in the auto parts store as well as the fragrance section of the department store."

Toluene has been proven to cause cancer and nervous system damage and is designated as hazardous waste.

Not Just in a Perfume Bottle

There is a dramatic increase in people who are made sick by fragrances because so many products are now scented. Babies and children are most vulnerable, as are people who are trying to recover from cancer and other illnesses.

Chemical fragrances are present in most laundry detergents, fabric softeners, laundry starches, dish-washing liquids, disinfectants, soaps, shampoos and other hair products, deodorants, cosmetics, sunscreen lotions, aftershaves, skin bracers, colognes, incense, analgesic creams, lip balms, shoe creams and waterproof sprays. Even products marked "unscented" often are falsely labelled and actually contain toxic fragrance products.

Perfume Politics

Using environmentally safe products is as important as recycling. If everyone stopped buying unsafe chemically scented products (which includes plastic garbage bags), companies would stop making them. This would end a lot of unnecessary pollution.

Some 84% of fragrance product ingredients have minimal or no toxicity testing data.

Scents and Illness

Exposure to fragrance products can cause exhaustion, weakness, dizziness, difficulty concentrating, disorientation, memory and brain fog, headaches, rashes, swollen lymph glands, severe muscle aches and spasms, heart palpitations, nausea, stomach cramps, vomiting, neuromotor dysfunction, loss of consciousness, seizures, as well as asthma attacks (inability to breathe) and "hay fever" symptoms.

Fragrances emit volatile organic compounds which can silently destroy the nerve's myelin sheath, damage your liver and immune system, cause lesions in your brain and the breakdown of your spinal cord and entire central nervous system.

Multiple Chemical Sensitivity is caused by overexposure to toxic chemicals. Even if you are not yet feeling the effects, your health is still being damaged and you may be in danger of developing MCS or other illnesses from continued exposure.

By using scented products you may be gambling on how much longer you have before your body can no longer cope with the toluene and other neurological poisons in these products.

Don't let your inability to eliminate all toxins from your life stop you from doing what you can. If you are still healthy, efforts you make now can help you prevent becoming chronically ill or developing MCS yourself. And you will save money by not using products that are unnecessary.

For More Information....

Ecological Health Alliance (EHA)
1019 Lodge Avenue
Victoria, BC V8X 3B1
phone: 250-384-8892

Lower mainland: 604-526-3326

Allergy and Environmental Health Association of Canada (AEHA)

MicMac RPO Box 24030

Dartmouth, NS B3A 4T4

Environmental Illness Society of Canada

#330, 256 King Edward Ave.

Ottawa, ON K1N 7M1

phone: 613-728-9493

The New Reactor, newsletter of
The Environmental Health Network
P.O. Box 1155

Larkspur CA 94977

The Human Ecologist, newsletter of
Human Ecology Action League

P.O. Box 20269

Atlanta, GA 30359

Nontoxic, Natural & Earthwise
by Debra Lynn Dadd (Los Angeles:
Jeremy P. Tarcher, Inc. 1992). This
book lists many safer products for
personal and household use.

**Chemical Exposures: Low Levels
and High Stakes**

by Prof. Nicholas Ashford and Dr.
Claudia Miller (Univ. of Texas Health
Science Center: Van Nostrand
Reinhold, 1990).

This brochure adapted by British Columbia
persons with MCS from the original pamphlet by
Breath of Fresh Air, Battleaxe, Oakland, CA.

Please feel free to copy and distribute.

No Perfume Means Healthier Air

Perfume today is not made from flowers
but from toxic chemicals. Perfume today
is about as romantic as hazardous waste.

More than 4,000 chemicals are used in
fragrances of which 95% are made from
petroleum. And as many as 600 separate
chemicals may be used in one fragrance
product.

Some toxic chemicals found in fragrances:

toluene, ethanol, acetone, benzene
derivatives, formaldehyde, limonene,
methylene chloride and many others
known to cause cancer, birth defects,
infertility, nervous system damage and
other injuries. As well, chloroform has
been found in fabric softeners.

No agency regulates the fragrance
industry, yet perfume chemicals are as
damaging to health as tobacco smoke.

How to Protect Yourself and People with Multiple Chemical Sensitivity from further Chemical Exposure

• What is MCS?

Multiple Chemical Sensitivity (MCS) is a disease that manifests itself through sensitivity to minute quantities of chemicals found everywhere in our daily lives. It can lead to states of degeneration with vital organ damage and, in some cases, to permanent central nervous system damage. Avoidance of further exposure is of utmost importance to all MCS sufferers.

• Stop using any product known to be toxic.

Don't use any pesticides or herbicides ever. There are safer alternatives. Don't wear clothes that have been exposed to insect repellent, flea powder or spray, flea bombs, mothballs, or other poisons.

• Stop using any scented products.

Even if you think it's unscented, if friends say it makes them feel sick, then believe them. If you've been using scented products on your clothes, know that it will take many washings and outdoor airings to make them safe, and that some scented clothes may never air out. Don't use "air fresheners" (including potpourri) in your home or car; the scent stays on your clothes. Never use scented detergents, fabric softeners and anti-cling products.

If you have a fireplace or wood-burning stove, don't use synthetic logs. Even though they're advertised as environmentally safe or flandily, they emit chemical fumes when burned. Don't burn plastic, cardboard, magazines, newspapers, or anything but clean, untreated dry wood.

• If you're still scented, keep your distance from people with MCS.

Don't approach or hug friends without warning; ask them first if it's all right.

• Don't get gas up your car if you're going to visit someone who has MCS.

• Don't have your clothes dry-cleaned.

And if you must wear dry cleaned clothing, do not wear clothes that have been dry-cleaned anywhere near people with MCS.

• Be aware that every public place you visit on the way to a fragrance-free event or an MCS friend's home adds toxins and scent to your clothes.

What we smell from petroleum-based perfumes are volatile chemicals (called volatile organic compounds, or VOCs) which travel through the air and stick to clothes, carpets and furniture.

If you have to take public transportation, if you have an errand to do, or if you're going to another event first, bring a clean change of clothes in a sealed clean double plastic bag.

Use Safer Products

Fabric softeners, laundry detergents, bleaches, anti-cling products, disinfectants, and other strongly scented household products have toxic ingredients.

If you regularly use hair mousse and gels, hairspray, or chemically process your hair, it will need many washings with a safe shampoo and the passage of time before you can be around someone with MCS without making them ill. And, if you use these products, your clothing also becomes impregnated with the same toxins. Remember, what may seem a mild fragrance to you can be excruciatingly toxic to someone with MCS.

To help you begin your journey to using safer products, we've listed a few safer products available locally, mostly in health food or specialty stores. But remember, it's best to ask friends with MCS which products are safe for them.

Note: It is important to regularly check all products as the manufacturers often "improve" their "safe" formulae which may include adding fragrances, thus rendering them unsafe, as happened recently with Arm & Hammer Washing Soda.

Soaps

Ivory (unscented)
Dr. Bronner's Unscented Baby Castille
Nature Clean
Mill Creek

All Purpose Cleaners

Plain Borax
Plain Baking Soda
Vinegar and Water

Laundry Aids

Plain Baking Soda (Arm & Hammer)
VIP Washing Soda & Detergent
20 Mule Train Borax
Bio Brite
Country Save
Nature Clean
Save-On Foods Washing Soda
Shaklee Unscented

Lotions and Creams

Plain almond oil, apricot kernel oil,
or olive oil
Simple Products (Finlandia)
Marcelle Products (London Drugs)
Body Shop's Unscented Product line

Shampoos

Nature Clean Shampoo & Rinse
Marcelle products
Body Shop Jojoba (unscented)
Dr. Bronner's Unscented Baby Castille

Sunscreens

Marcelle (London Drugs)
Nature's Gate for Children (adult version
contains fragrance product)
Mill Creek for Faces

Please be kind to yourself, to
the environment, and to
people you love, especially to
those who have MCS.